



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
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The Role of the Introductions and Transfers Committee in Disease Management as it Relates to Oysters (in Nova Scotia)

Scotian Pride
Halifax, NS
January 2011



Canada



Regulatory/Legislative Basis

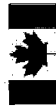
- Authority - *Fisheries Act*
- *Fishery (General) Regulations*
 - Section 55: no person shall, unless authorized transfer any live fish to any fish rearing facility or to release live fish into any fish habitat” unless authorized
 - Section 56: the Minister may issue a licence if:
 - (a) the release or transfer of the fish would be in keeping with the proper management and control of fisheries;
 - (b) the fish do not have any disease or disease agent that may be harmful to the protection and conservation of fish; and
 - (c) the release or transfer of the fish will not have an adverse effect on the stock size of fish or the genetic characteristics In-keeping with the proper management and control of fisheries
- *Fisheries Act* section 78 - a person who contravenes the Act or regulations commits an offense.





The National Picture

- September 2003 the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM) approved the National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms
- Code provides consistency in terms of assessing proposals to move aquatic organisms from place to place.
 - The Canada wide creation of Introductions and Transfers Committees within jurisdictions.
 - The creation and implementation of the formal Risk Assessment tool.
 - The establishment of a National Registry of Risk Assessments.
 - The defining of Roles and Responsibilities (pgs 33-36).

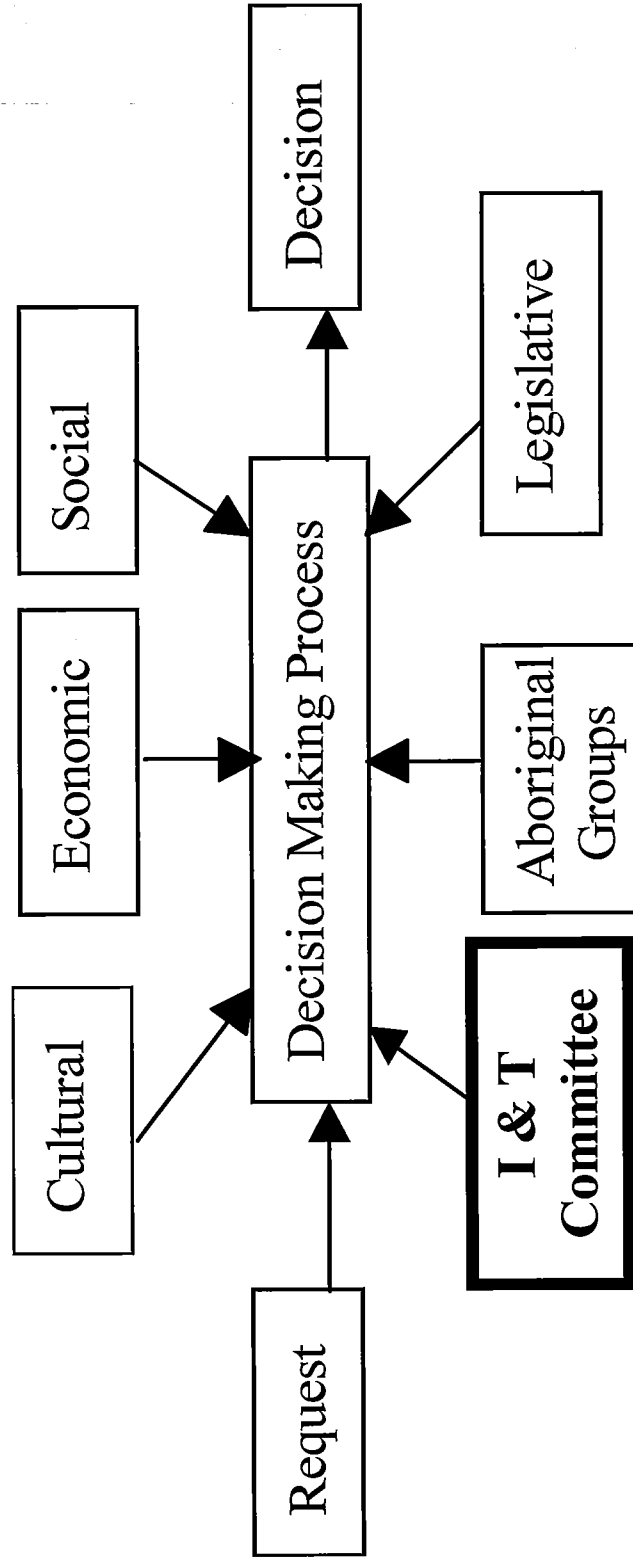


The National Picture Cont...

- The National Code sets out a mechanism for assessing proposals to intentionally introduce or transfer aquatic organisms such that a consistent process is applied when evaluating and mitigating the potential for:
 - RISKS of harmful alterations of the natural aquatic ecosystems
 - RISKS of deleterious genetic changes in indigenous fish populations; and
 - RISKS to fish health from the potential introduction and spread of pathogens and parasites.



Decision Making Process





Nova Scotia Introductions & Transfers Committee

- The Nova Scotia Introductions and Transfers Committee (NSITC) had been established in the mid 1990s, more formally in 1997.
- NSITC comprised of several DFO divisions and the Province's Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries divisions.
- Chaired by DFO's Aquaculture Management Office (AMO).
- NSITC meets as required, minimum 2 times per year.
- Most applications handled by the Chairperson of the NSITC who manages the review process.

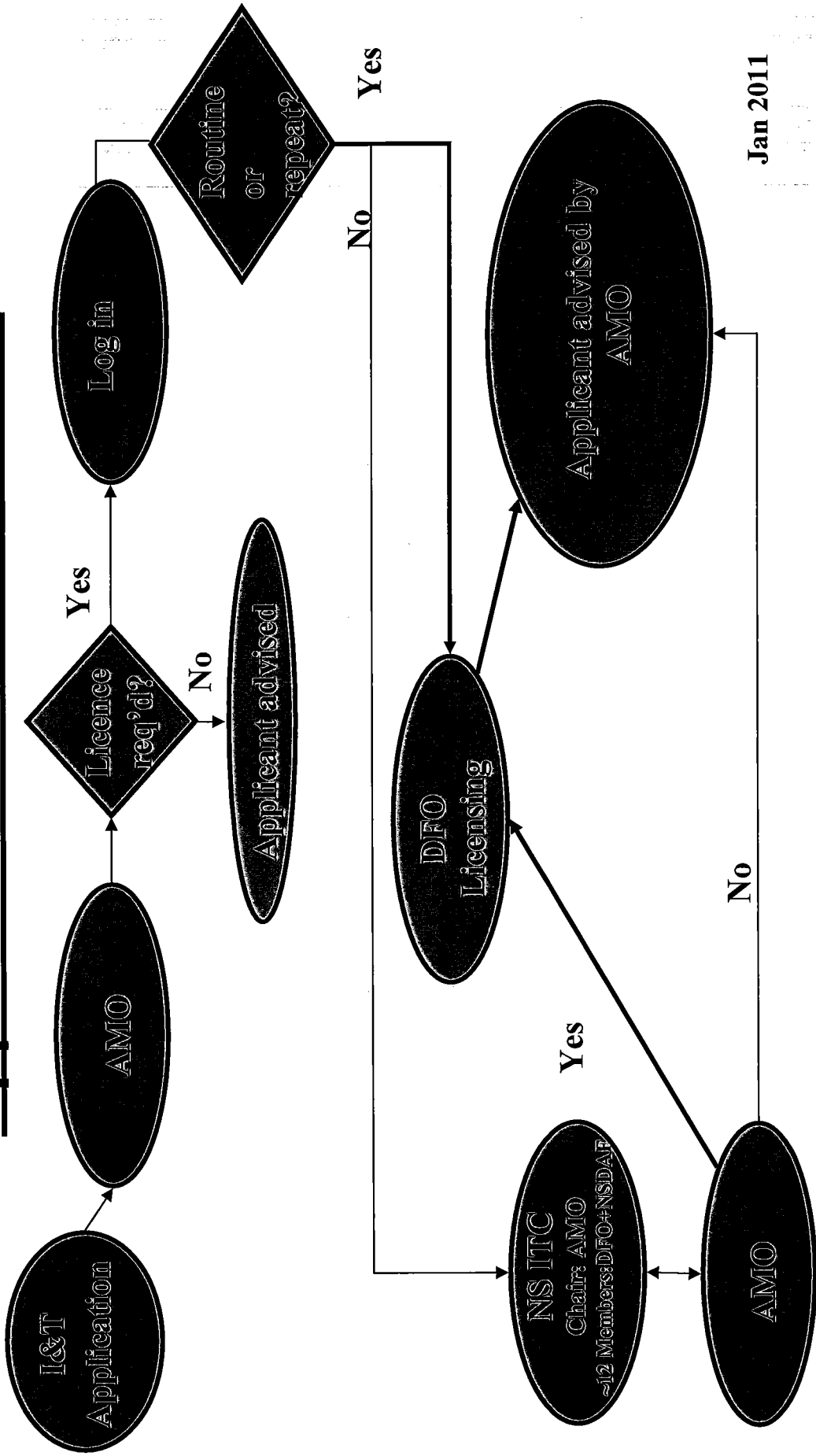


NSITC Activities

- Annual individual applications received ~ 80
 - 2 formal Risk Assessments completed over the past year, 1 pending.
- Section 56 F(G)R Transfer Licences issued ~ 70
- 150 routine General Transfer Licences (GTL) issued for repeat transfers within Nova Scotia subject to very specific criteria.
- Reviews take up to 6 weeks depending on whether information is complete or not.
 - Risk Assessments: minimum 6 months



APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS



Jan 2011



How Do We Manage Fish Health Concerns?

- For salmonids
 - Fish Health Protection Regulations
 - Manual of Compliance
- For shellfish
 - No regulation specifically written for shellfish health
 - No manual of compliance
 - Section 56 (b) of the Fishery (General) Regulations
- Non salmonids
 - No regulation specifically written for non-salmonid health
 - No manual of compliance
 - Section 56 (b) of the Fishery (General) Regulations





How do we manage fish health concerns?

Shellfish testing

- Histology, PCR
- Oyster surveillance within the Maritime provinces (NS, NB, and PEI)
 - Scattered
 - Factors for consideration in selecting sites for health analysis
 - Risk vectors
 - Geography
 - Oyster population size
 - Accessibility
 - History



How does this get incorporated into Decisions?

- Licences: not issued until fish health, ecological & genetic impacts have been assessed
- Adequate & up-to-date fish health must be provided with I&T application
- Fish health is reviewed by the NSITC
 - DFO & provincial aquatic animal health representatives of the I&TC will review available health information & provide scientific advice on risks to aquatic animal health and possible mitigation measures





How does this get incorporated into Decisions?

- Scientific advice based on available health information is provided to the chair/committee
 - No risk based on current data
 - Some risk, mitigation possible
 - Some risk, no mitigation available
 - Insufficient information to assess
- If no other concerns are identified (i.e. ecological or genetic impacts)
→ I&T licence issued with a specific conditions.
- Licence conditions minimize potential risks with introductions & transfers
 - Specific licence conditions for routine movements
 - Further mitigation measures may be written into the licence as required



In Conclusion...

- Fish health reports are critical to the overall review of applications submitted to the NSITC.
- Clients are responsible for providing any/all fish health information they have with all applications made to the NS IT&C.
- In the absence of fish health, the I&T *may* use alternative fish surveillance data, *if* available, *however...*
- Lack of adequate information may result in delays in the application process.



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Thank You – Questions?

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